

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE IX CORPS FORESTALLED

(Sketches 25, 26)

At daybreak on the 9th August, the third morning after the 9 Aug. landing, the dispositions of the IX Corps at Suvla were roughly sketch as follows. On the left, at Kiretch Tepe, General Mahon was 25. holding, with three battalions under Br.-General Nicol, the position astride the ridge which the 11/Manchester had gained on the night of the landing. Opposed to them, about 800 yards to the eastward, were the same three companies of *Gallipoli Gendarmerie*. The pioneer battalion and field companies of the 10th Division were constructing shelters for corps headquarters and a reserve line of trenches near Ghazi Baba. At the foot of the southern slopes of the ridge were two battalions of the 34th Brigade—the 5/Dorset and the 9/Lancashire Fusiliers. Both these battalions were nominally under General Mahon's orders, but he had not yet established touch with either of them.

Near Hill 10 was Br.-General Sitwell with the 8/Northumberland Fusiliers and the 11/Manchester of his own (34th) brigade and the weak 6/Yorkshire of the 32nd Brigade.

The 32nd Brigade (less the 6/Yorkshire, but with the 6/East Yorkshire, Pioneers, attached) was at or near Sulajik. The East Yorkshire had just started towards the Tekke Tepe ridge, supported by the 8/West Riding. The brigadier (Colonel Minogue), with the 6/York & Lancaster, was waiting to advance against Anafarta Sagir as soon as the missing 9/West Yorkshire had been found.

The 33rd Brigade (Br.-General Maxwell), less the 9/Sherwood Foresters in the trenches south-west of the Salt Lake, was moving forward to its assembly position to attack the W Hills and the Anafarta spur.

Br.-General Hill was still on Chocolate Hill with five battalions of the 10th Division, but two of these battalions (the 6/R. Irish Fusiliers and 6/R. Dublin Fusiliers) were now to be temporarily attached to the 33rd Brigade.

9 Aug. Major-General Hon. J. E. Lindley, commanding the 53rd Division, had landed with three staff officers the previous evening, and was bivouacking alongside 11th Division headquarters. The headquarters of the 160th Brigade (Br.-General J. J. F. Hume) and one battalion of the 159th Brigade (1/4th Cheshire) had also landed the previous evening. Three battalions of the 160th Brigade had landed during the night,<sup>1</sup> and the whole of the 158th Brigade (Br.-General F. C. Lloyd) and the headquarters and remaining three battalions of the 159th Brigade (Br.-General E. A. Cowan) had arrived in the bay and were beginning to come ashore. The personnel of the divisional signal company, but without any equipment,<sup>2</sup> was also beginning to land. All troops of the 53rd Division, as and when they became available, had been put at General Hammersley's disposal for the operations on this day; but the corps commander had told Hammersley that he "hoped they would" be used in such a way that it would be possible to reassemble "them in the evening, under their own commander, to form a corps reserve."

IX Corps headquarters had also landed overnight, and was establishing itself near Ghazi Baba. It was now in telephonic communication with the 10th and 11th Divisions.

The Turkish dispositions were as detailed at the end of the preceding chapter. Numerically the Turks were still very inferior to General Stopford's force. But man for man, compared to the individual Turk, fighting on a scrub-covered hillside in semi-tropical heat, the New Army and Territorial troops were at a great disadvantage. The marksmanship of the Turkish troops was excellent: that of the British was very poor.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fourth battalion (2/4th R. West Kent) did not arrive till the night of 10th/11th August.

<sup>2</sup> This signal company had been sent out from England without its equipment, which was to be provided from Egypt, but had not yet arrived.

<sup>3</sup> Before going to Gallipoli, the 53rd (Welsh) Division, T.F., had undergone a considerable change in the composition of its infantry brigades as the result of its best-trained battalions being sent away as reinforcements to the Western front. Thus the 158th Brigade had lost the 1/4th R. Welch Fusiliers, replaced by the 1/1st Hereford, the only battalion of the Welsh Border Brigade left at home by February 1915. The 159th Brigade had lost two battalions, receiving in their place the 1/4th and 1/5th Welch. The 160th Brigade was a new formation. The 1/4th Sussex had been "Army Troops attached Home Counties Division". The 2/4th Queen's was a composite unit provided by the 2/4th and 2/5th Queen's Regiments. The 2/4th R. West Kent was constituted from the 2nd-Line battalions of the West Kent and Buffs, and the 2/10th Middlesex from the 2nd-Line of the 8th and 10th Middlesex. One field company, also sent to France, had been replaced by a 2nd-Line unit. This reorganization had been completed less than three months before the division left England.

Before describing the events of the 9th August at Suvla 8 Aug. it will perhaps simplify the story to recapitulate the various operation orders that had been issued within the IX Corps. At 5.30 P.M. on the 8th General Stopford had instructed General Hammersley to assault the Anafarta spur at a time of his own choosing, and had ordered General Mahon to move forward, at an hour which "either preceded or coincided with" the hour of Hammersley's advance, to occupy the Tekke Tepe ridge. After his meeting with Sir Ian Hamilton, Stopford had further urged Hammersley to begin his advance "as early as possible."

Hammersley had issued three separate orders. First, on his own initiative, he had arranged that the 33rd Brigade should attack the W Hills on the morning of the 9th, the rest of his division standing fast. Secondly, on receipt of the corps order, he had warned the 32nd and 33rd Brigades that orders would be issued later for an attack next day on the Anafarta spur, including the W Hills. Thirdly, as a result of Sir Ian Hamilton's intervention, he had cancelled his warning order within half an hour of its despatch, had increased the divisional objective to include the crest of the Tekke Tepe ridge as far north as Kavak Tepe, and, at Sir Ian's express instigation, had stipulated that at least one battalion of the 32nd Brigade must reach the crest of the ridge before dawn.

The action taken by the 32nd Brigade on receipt of these orders has already been described. Br.-General Maxwell's revised order for the 33rd Brigade was issued at 10.15 P.M. on the 8th, and arranged for his assault on the Anafarta spur to begin at 5 A.M. General Mahon, on receipt of the corps order issued at 5.30 P.M. merely warned Br.-General Nicol that he would be required to advance along the Kiretch Tepe ridge next morning with five battalions, and added that he would visit brigade headquarters at 6 A.M. to discuss further details.

It will be seen, therefore, that with two brigades of the 11th Division moving forward at different hours, and the 10th Division not even forming its plans till after the 11th Division had started, any form of mutual support in the IX Corps area was practically unattainable.

#### ADVANCE OF THE 32ND BRIGADE

In his written orders, issued at 3.30 A.M. on the 9th, Colonel 9 Aug. Minogue (32nd Brigade) ordered the 8th W. Riding to lead the advance on Tekke Tepe. But a few moments later, remember-

9 Aug. ing Hammersley's message to "send the pioneers", he ordered Lieut.-Colonel H. G. A. Moore, commanding the 6/East Yorkshire, to push on at once with his own battalion and the 67th Field Company R.E.; the 8/West Riding would follow in support, and the other two battalions of the brigade would follow on as soon as the 9/West Yorkshire had been found.

The East Yorkshire, after returning to Sulajik, had been deployed in one line, over half a mile long, and told to "dig in". By that time, however, the men were so dazed with fatigue that most of them fell asleep. When, therefore, the order to march again was passed down the line, there was another long delay before they were ready to start. But a little before four o'clock one company had been collected, and Colonel Moore, realizing that every moment was valuable, pushed off with this one company, leaving word for the other three to follow. Major Brunner and two sections of the field company started off with Moore.

The brigade commander's ignorance of the exact whereabouts of his units, and his unfortunate decision to make them concentrate at Sulajik, had been fatal. It was now more than seven hours since Sir Ian Hamilton had insisted that "at least one battalion" must be established on the crest of the ridge before daylight. Day would be breaking in less than a quarter of an hour; and at this very moment two Turkish battalions were breasting the slopes on the opposite side of the ridge.

As soon as daylight came, Moore and his leading company were fired on from the direction of Anafarta, and he had lost one officer and several men before reaching the foot of the ridge. From this point onwards the sides of the hill were densely covered with high, prickly scrub, and movement was often impossible except along the goat-tracks which twisted in all directions. Very soon the little force became split up into small scattered groups, moving in single file.

Turkish rifle fire from the front and both flanks was now becoming persistent, and when Colonel Moore and a handful of men approached the top of the ridge, a number of Turks were already pouring over it from the other side. The only course open to Moore was to fall back to meet the rest of his battalion. Despite the 48 hours' delay, the race for Tekke Tepe had been lost by rather less than half an hour.

But the Turkish attack had now begun. Streams of Turks came pouring down the hill, and shrapnel opened on the troops in the plain below. The retirement of Moore's little party was attended by heavy loss. Only the colonel, two other officers,

and two men reached the foothills near Baka Baba, and here <sup>9 Aug.</sup> they were overpowered and taken prisoner.<sup>1</sup>

The 8/West Riding and the remaining three companies of pioneers now began to reach the foothills and were soon engaged with the Turks. Lieut.-Colonel H. J. Johnston and the second-in-command of the West Riding were both killed; the machine guns of the pioneers were rushed and captured; and both battalions, very intermixed, fell back in some disorder to the north of Sulajik.

The 9/West Yorkshire had fared no better. Soon after daylight, and before the order sent out overnight had reached him, the commander of this battalion decided to move forward to some rising ground which promised a better field of fire. While carrying out this movement the battalion was attacked in front and flank. The leading companies fell back with heavy casualties, and for a short time the situation seemed critical. But an appeal for reinforcements brought up two companies of the 6/York & Lancaster; the Turkish advance was checked; and the West Yorkshire took up a position with its right resting a little north of Sulajik and its left bent back in the direction of Hill 10. The gap on the northern flank was partially filled by troops of Sitwell's brigade, and later in the day all four battalions of the 159th Brigade (53rd Division), which had finished landing at C Beach that morning, were hurried forward in turn to assist in holding the attenuated front line.<sup>2</sup>

The experiences of this brigade on landing were trying in the extreme. Many of the men had not set foot on shore for over three weeks. Neither the brigade staff nor any of the regimental officers had seen a map of Suvla, and none of them had any idea of the situation in front. Amongst the crowds of troops encountered on the beach there was a general air of depression, confusion, and indifference; which spread amongst the new-comers like a fog, and very rapidly. At first no orders arrived. Units were marched to the western slopes of Lala Baba; the brigade staff climbed the hill to reconnoitre; and the first sight which met their gaze was the dry Salt Lake covered with crowds of men streaming back to the beach "like a crowd "streaming away from a football match".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moore was bayoneted by a Turk after surrendering and died soon afterwards. Major Brunner, hit in the ankle on the way down the hill, was also killed in cold blood. The third officer, Lieut. J. Stiff, was spared, and has lived to tell the tale.

<sup>2</sup> Two of the three battalions of the 160th Brigade which had landed overnight had already been sent forward to assist Br.-General Maxwell.

<sup>3</sup> Extract from the diary of a staff officer of the division. These were troops belonging to General Maxwell's force, which, as will be shown later, had recaptured Scimitar Hill and had then been driven back.

9 Aug. An officer then arrived with a verbal order that two battalions of the brigade were to move forward at once to reinforce Br.-General Sitwell; but the only indication he could give of Sitwell's position was that he was "somewhere over there in the bush". With this slender direction, and no other orders of any description, the 1/4th Cheshire and the 1/5th Welch were sent forward into action. They had no maps, and no ammunition beyond what they carried in their pouches. Later in the day a similar order arrived for brigade headquarters and the two remaining battalions (1/7th Cheshire and 1/4th Welch) to "report to General Sitwell in the bush". Once again no information was given as to Sitwell's whereabouts. So the brigadier, the brigade-major, the staff-captain and the brigade machine-gun officer moved off in line, at 250 paces interval, at the head of their column, to look for him. He was found by the left-hand man.

Sketch 26. Fortunately, though the situation on this part of the field, to the north of Sulajik, had caused great alarm, the Turks made no effort to press their advantage of the morning, and British casualties during the rest of the day were small. But the enemy was in possession of the crest and forward slopes of Tekke Tepe, and the invading troops were now on the defensive in the open plain below.

#### ADVANCE OF THE 33RD BRIGADE

Br.-General Maxwell had ordered his attack to be carried out by the 6/Border Regiment, the 7/S. Staffordshire, and the 6/Lincolnshire, in that order from right to left, and these units were to deploy on a line running north-east from Green Hill to Kanli Keupru Dere. The two battalions detached from General Hill's force (6/R. Irish Fusiliers and 6/R. Dublin Fusiliers) were to remain in reserve near Chocolate Hill, but their machine guns, escorted by one company of Dublin Fusiliers, were to move forward to support the right flank of the attack.

At the time of issuing his orders General Maxwell knew that Scimitar Hill was held by British troops, and he believed that the Tekke Tepe ridge would be occupied before dawn by a portion of the 32nd Brigade. He expected, therefore, that his position of deployment would be covered. The South Staffordshire was already close to its starting-point. Brigade headquarters with the Lincolnshire and the Border Regiment moved up from Lala Baba about 2 A.M., advancing straight across the Salt Lake.

All unknown to General Maxwell,<sup>1</sup> however, Scimitar Hill 9 Aug. had been evacuated during the night. As soon as the Lincolnshire and the South Staffordshire began to approach it, they were met by considerable fire, and at the same moment a stream of Turks came pouring down the slopes of the Anafarta spur.

The two battalions pressed forward to attack, but both suffered heavily from Turkish shrapnel fire. The South Staffordshire was particularly unfortunate, for the colonel, adjutant, second-in-command and all four company commanders were hit, and in the face of this trial the advance faded away. Small parties of the battalion, however, pushed on, with the Lincolnshire; the northern end of Scimitar Hill was again reoccupied; and though the line recoiled more than once, it was carried back each time to the top of the hill. On the right, meanwhile, the 6/Border had started off in the direction of the W Hills, and in that part of the field progress was for a time satisfactory.

Soon after 5 A.M., in response to an urgent appeal from the Lincolnshire for reinforcements, General Maxwell sent up the 6/Royal Dublin Fusiliers (less one company) to Scimitar Hill, followed later by the 6/R. Irish Fusiliers. But about 10 A.M. a panic amongst certain overstrained troops on the left, who came rushing back with a cry, "The Turks are on us!" resulted in a fresh withdrawal to the western slopes, where the line was again restored.

Meanwhile the 2/4th Queen's and the 1/4th R. Sussex of the 160th Brigade had been placed at Maxwell's disposal. The 2/4th Queen's was ordered to the neighbourhood of Chocolate Hill; and at 9 A.M. a further order was received to "proceed round the northern slopes of the hill to support the troops in front, who are hard pressed" The battalion had no maps, but Scimitar Hill was pointed out to the commanding officer. He was told that his battalion must dig itself in in a supporting position, but that he must on no account "go off into the blue"<sup>1</sup>

The battalion moved off at once, and was met by many stragglers falling back with extravagant stories of defeat. On the slopes of the hill it fell in with mixed parties of all the forward battalions, and the whole line then went forward, and again reached the crest. But the Turkish shelling was considerable, and heavy casualties were suffered. The scrub caught fire, the hillside began to burn fiercely, and about midday the hill was again abandoned.<sup>2</sup> This time the troops fell back to a general

<sup>1</sup> Diary of the commanding officer.

<sup>2</sup> During this retirement the adjutant of the 6/Lincolnshire, Captain P. H. Hansen, with a few volunteers, rushed back into the blazing scrub

9 Aug. line running south from Sulajik, and here they were reinforced by the 1/4th R. Sussex.<sup>1</sup> The Border Regiment, on the extreme right, held on throughout the day to a position near Torgut Chesme, but at 5 P.M. was ordered to fall back towards Green Hill. In the course of this unsuccessful attack Br.-General Maxwell's five battalions had lost rather more than 1,500 men, while the losses of the 2/4th Queen's amounted to 250.

During the greater part of the day the attacking infantry had been covered by only eight 18-pdrs. and two mountain guns,<sup>2</sup> and these had proved inadequate to silence the Turkish artillery. The supporting ships had done their best to help, but according to Turkish information not a single casualty in this part of the field was caused throughout the day by naval gun-fire.

While the rest of the 33rd Brigade was fighting to the north of Chocolate Hill and Green Hill, the 9/Sherwood Foresters, which for the last 48 hours had been chafing in idleness in the trenches south of the Salt Lake, was making a gallant effort to push forward to the east of Hetman Chair to form a link between the right flank of the troops attacking the W Hills and the left of the Auzac corps on Damakjelik Bair.

At any period during the previous two days this task could have been accomplished with little loss, but the chance had now gone. The troops were told before starting that the advance was unlikely to be opposed. But they soon came into collision with advancing Turks on both sides of Azmak Dere. The right flank company was driven back soon after it had crossed the bed of the stream, and touch with Damakjelik Bair was not established. The companies on the northern side managed to reach a point about 500 yards west of Hetman Chair, but there they were stopped by fire. Despite heavy casualties, however, they succeeded in holding their own throughout the day; and when darkness fell they dug themselves in on a line running south to Azmak Dere at a point near Kazlar Chair. Their plucky stand throughout the hours

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and rescued several badly wounded men who must otherwise have been burnt to death. He was awarded the V.C.

<sup>1</sup> The orders to the 1/4th R. Sussex, which was also sent forward without maps, were vague in the extreme. The colonel was verbally told "to restore the line". No one knew where it was, but he was told that "if he went on in that direction (pointing to a column of smoke from the "burning scrub) he ought to find the 2/4th Queen's". By luck that battalion was found lining a ditch, and the R. Sussex came in on its northern flank.

<sup>2</sup> Two mountain guns had been knocked out at the beginning of the action. Furthermore, the 18-pdrs. had been placed in position to fire on the Anafarta spur, and could not fire on Scimitar Hill.

of daylight undoubtedly prevented the left of the Turkish 9 Aug. 12th Division from pushing in between the IX and Anzac Corps.<sup>1</sup>

Later, by order of General Hammersley, a battalion (the 1/1st Hereford) of the 158th Brigade, which had landed that morning, was sent out to assist the Sherwood Foresters and to extend their line to Damakjelik Bair. But the orders issued to the battalion by the 53rd Division were very inexplicit. Through no fault of its own it was unable to serve any useful purpose, and after suffering some casualties, including Lieut.-Colonel Geoffrey Drage, from shrapnel fire, it was ordered by the 11th Division to fall back to the trenches south of the Salt Lake.

#### THE FIGHTING ON THE KIRETCH TEPE RIDGE

On the northern flank at Suvla General Mahon's operations on the 9th were equally disappointing.

It has already been shown that overnight Br.-General Nicol, holding a position astride the ridge with three battalions, was warned by divisional headquarters that he would be required to push forward next day, that his force would consist of five battalions and a mountain battery, and that General Mahon would visit his headquarters at 6 A.M. to discuss detailed plans. As General Nicol was only in touch with three battalions, and had no knowledge of the situation, he could only await his divisional commander's arrival; but at day-break he sent back his brigade's water-bottles to be refilled in anticipation of a forward move.

General Mahon reached brigade headquarters at 6 A.M. He was aware that the 5/Dorset and the 9/Lancashire Fusiliers were the two extra battalions attached to his command; but he was still out of touch with the former and had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the Fusiliers.

Meanwhile corps headquarters had made arrangements for the left flank destroyer to support Mahon's advance along the Kiretch Tepe ridge by opening fire on the highest point of the crest at 6 A.M.; and (apparently by order of the corps) Lieut.-Colonel Hannay, commanding the 5/Dorset, had received an order from the 34th Brigade to rendezvous on a small spur in front of his own position at 6 A.M., ready to advance from that point in command of a small force consisting of his own battalion and the Lancashire Fusiliers as soon as the destroyer on the left flank began to shell the crest.

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-Colonel L. A. Bosanquet, commanding the battalion, was wounded during the afternoon but did not leave his post till 7 P.M.

9 Aug. When Mahon reached 30th Brigade headquarters Nicol reported that his rations and water had not yet arrived; but at that moment an advance was seen to be starting in the plain below. It was concluded that these troops were Nicol's reinforcing battalions; it was plain that they were already in action;<sup>1</sup> and despite Nicol's unreadiness he was now ordered to "carry on" at once and do the best you can". His own units were thereupon ordered (in a message issued at 6.50 A.M.) to advance along the ridge at 7.30 A.M., and the brigade-major was sent off to the right to tell the 5/Dorset not to advance any further till that hour and the Lancashire Fusiliers to remain in divisional reserve.

Soon after half past seven the troops were on the move. On the northern slopes of the ridge were two companies of the 5/R. Inniskilling Fusiliers. The 6/R. Munster Fusiliers was on the crest, where two machine guns of the R.N.A.C.D. had come into action. The 7/R. Munster Fusiliers, which had been obliged to start without its water-bottles, was on the southern slopes, and the 5/Dorset at the foot of the ridge. Two companies of the Inniskilling Fusiliers were in support on the southern slopes of the ridge, and the 9/Lancashire Fusiliers in reserve close to Hill 10.

The shooting by the left flank destroyer—the *Foxhound*<sup>2</sup>—had been exceptionally accurate, and the troops on the northern slopes were at first able to make steady progress. The Turks had no artillery on the ridge and no machine guns, and British casualties were slight. Near the highest point of the ridge, however, resistance began to stiffen—the 6/R. Munster Fusiliers was apparently in touch with the Turkish strong-point—and here the advance was checked. But no reinforcements had yet joined the *Gallipoli Gendarmerie*, and Br.-General Nicol estimated the total Turkish strength opposed to him at not more than 700. Actually it was about half that number.

South of the crest line the 7/R. Munster Fusiliers and the 5/Dorset had been ordered to head direct for Kidney Hill—a prominent peak on the southern slopes of Kiretch Tepe—about 500 yards to the east of the highest point of the ridge. This hill was occupied by a small force of Turks, and by mid-day the 5/Dorset had taken up a line about 700 yards south of it, facing north, with the Munsters on the left on the southern slope of the ridge. Opposition was still far from heavy, and

<sup>1</sup> The Dorset came under fire as soon as they advanced on their rendezvous, and they had to fight to take it.

<sup>2</sup> After being for an hour the *Foxhound* was relieved by the *Grampus* at 7 A.M.

neither battalion had suffered many casualties. But the rank 9 Aug. and file of both battalions were tired out. The Munsters in particular, having no water-bottles, were suffering acutely from thirst, and no more progress could be made. Early in the afternoon they fell back, and the 5/Dorset was subsequently ordered to conform. By nightfall all the ground gained in this sector had been voluntarily relinquished and both battalions were back in their old positions.

On the crest of the ridge meanwhile, the Turkish strong-point was subjected about half past one to a bombardment from the *Grampus* (Captain Roy Bacchus) and the four mountain guns attached to Nicol's brigade. Following this bombardment, the 6/Munster made another short advance, and carried a small post near the south-western end of the high crest.<sup>1</sup> But this was the high-water mark of success, and nothing more was attempted throughout the day. The sun always struck more fiercely on the rocky slopes of Kiretch Tepe than on any other part of the Suvla front; the supply of water on that flank was still a difficulty; and there, too, maddening thirst was as much responsible as Turkish bullets for checking the Irish troops. About half past ten the destroyer *Grampus* received an urgent appeal from the leading troops on the left flank to "send us water, as we are dying with thirst". Thereupon a whaler was rushed ashore with barrels and kettles filled with water; she continued to ply backwards and forwards with fresh supplies; and early in the afternoon Captain Bacchus sent ashore two water-tanks, fitted with taps, and rigged them up on the beach<sup>2</sup> to simplify and speed up the filling of water-bottles.

<sup>1</sup> This attack was led by Major J. N. Jephson, and the position was subsequently known as Jephson's Post.

<sup>2</sup> These details, taken from the destroyer's log, have been graphically described in a private letter from a petty officer who was serving in the *Grampus* at the time.

"Five seamen and a cox were soon ready, and a five-bared open boat (whaler) was ready to head in shore at very short notice. Kettles and breakers were meanwhile being filled by stokers (pumped by hand, too) from the ship's tanks, and were ready and put in the boat almost as soon as crew and boat could be got ready. I have seen boats under oars move quickly, plus help move them myself; but I know that that boat moved the fastest I have ever seen—and without exaggeration I'll say she was twice her length up the beach when we stopped." Another point in this petty officer's letter makes memorable reading. "Most of all", he writes, "I learnt in Gallipoli to appreciate the *qualities* of English speaking men, independent of the land of their birth, or their brogue or slang, or even vulgarity. Their cheerfulness, bravery, most remarkable strength and endurance, plus the remarkable relationship that did exist, particularly when gaps were blown in their lines. Instinctively someone would fill it, and all were facing their front and quite busy again, peppering away. During that campaign we met Australians, New Zealanders, Dublins, numerous home town regiments, Inniskillings and Maoris—all shoulder

9 Aug. General Mahon, who had watched the fight from brigade headquarters, returned to his own camp at four o'clock highly dissatisfied with the meagre results of the day. It was therefore greatly to his surprise that at half past four he received a special message from General Stopford, expressing his satisfaction at what the troops had achieved. "Do not try any more to-day", this message ended, "unless the enemy gives you a favourable "chance"

Though the ill-success of the day's operations at Suvla was attributed to lack of artillery support, it had its real origin in the indifferent staff work resulting from the almost inconceivable chaos ashore. On the left the enemy's fire had been negligible. On the right, the haphazard manner in which several battalions of the 53rd Division had been flung into action, without intelligible orders and even without maps, had not only prejudiced any chance of success, but had fatally affected their morale. By placing every available man of that division under General Hammersley's orders for the day's operations, General Stopford had deprived himself in advance of the opportunity of exercising any direct control over the battle.

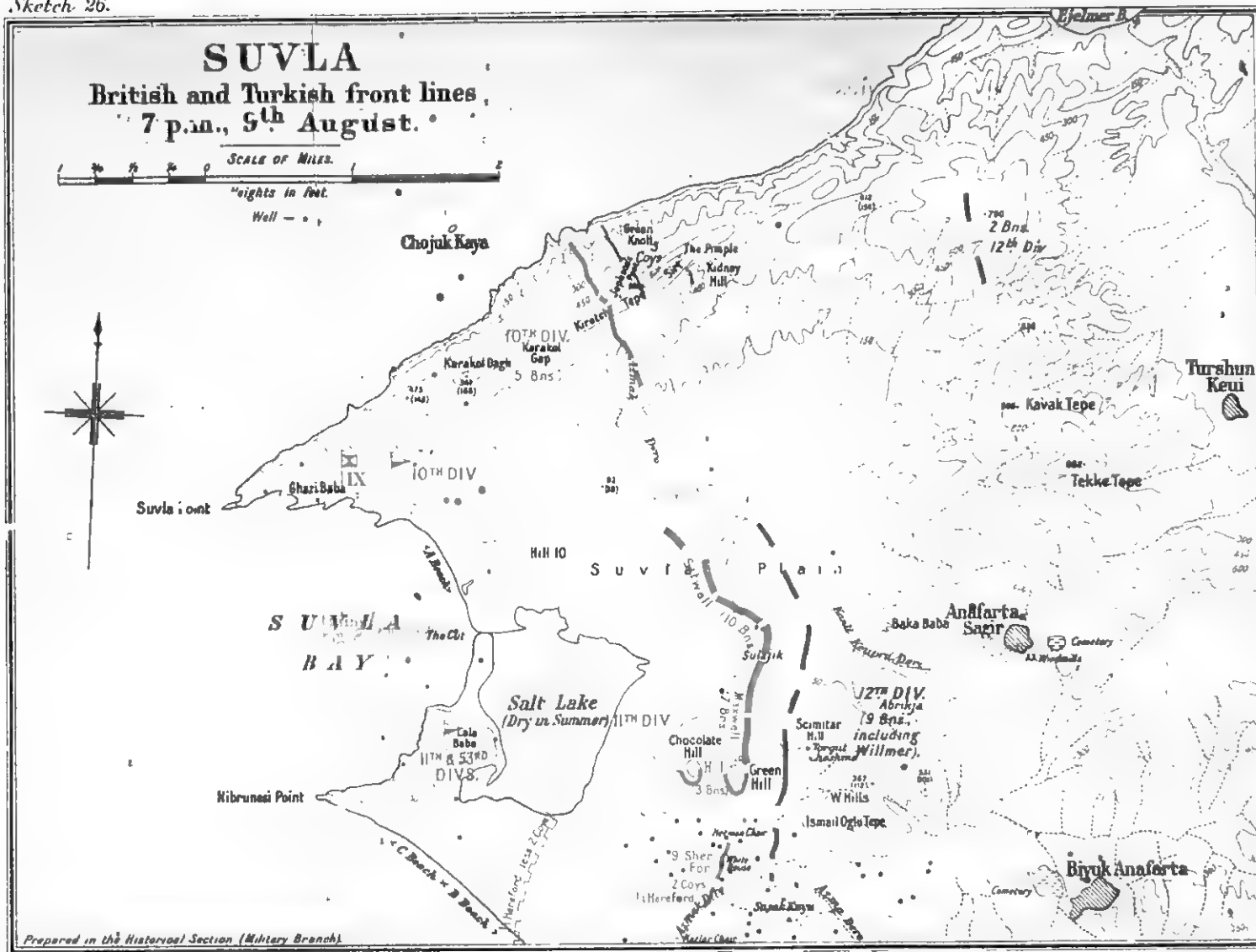
Sir Ian Hamilton, who had spent the night of the 8th/9th in the admiral's flagship at Suvla, landed about 8.30 A.M. on the 9th to visit the corps commander, and to hear the latest reports from the troops in action. He had witnessed the check to Hammersley's brigades from the bridge of the flagship, and was anxious to impress on Stopford the extreme importance of making rapid progress along the Kiretch Tepe ridge. He relates that "we found Stopford, about four or five hundred "yards East of Ghazi Baba, supervising the building of some "splinter-proof Headquarters huts for himself and Staff".<sup>1</sup>

Corps headquarters having no news from General Mahon, the Commander-in-Chief went forward under a scattered rifle-fire, to see the situation for himself. He found Mahon close to the firing line, and heard from him, without comment, that there were probably only about 600 Turks against him, but that "he did not want to lose men in making frontal attacks" so was trying to work round the flank. On returning to corps headquarters Sir Ian Hamilton told Stopford of this conversa-

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"to shoulder somewhere in the line. All quite happy too, with their backs "to the wall—a sea wall. If only the same relationships could be fostered "these days, for our ends and aims are all common. . . . Everything "English is not all in England."

<sup>1</sup> "Gallipoli Diary", ii. p. 72.



tion and added that "the sooner the Kiretch Tepe nettle was <sup>9 Aug.</sup> "grasped the less it would sting". But the corps commander explained that he himself had issued an order deprecating frontal attacks,<sup>1</sup> and there, once more, the subject was allowed to drop. Sir Ian Hamilton then met General Braithwaite, his Chief of the General Staff, who had come over from Imbros to report. Subsequently, about noon, he hurried off in a motor-boat to visit the Anzac front.

Summing up the situation at Suvla on the evening of the 9th August it will be seen that the IX Corps had not only lost all the advantages which the surprise landing had given it. Its position was only saved from peril by the continued weakness of the Turks. Its divisions and brigades had had their organization so completely broken up, and their units were so widely scattered, that the normal chain of command had disappeared—even the issue of rations was a difficult problem—and the general situation was chaotic. Of the 22 British battalions which had made the original landing, the majority had suffered a high proportion of casualties; many of them were very intermixed with other units; and all were tired, disorganized and dispirited. The 53rd Division, which had only just arrived, was also widely scattered. The divisional staff had inevitably lost all touch with its various units; and most of the troops had been badly shaken by the experiences of their first day ashore.

Sir Frederick Stopford, realizing the importance of reorganization, was anxious to attempt no further offensive action till this had been done. About 5 P.M., however, he received a letter from General Braithwaite expressing the belief that a force of six to eight battalions, well commanded by a specially selected officer, should be able to capture the W Hills and the Anafarta spur. This letter laid stress on the need for Stopford's personal influence and driving power to get the operation through.

Stopford looked upon this letter as tantamount to an order to attack the Anafarta spur next morning. But while G.H.Q. was urging him forward, local influences were dragging him back. The commander of the 11th Division was insisting that his troops were utterly exhausted, and Stopford himself was convinced that there was not enough artillery to attack on the wide front which General Braithwaite suggested. In this dilemma he decided to attack the central portion of the spur, and to entrust the operation to Major-General Lindley

<sup>1</sup> See page 273.

9 Aug. with nine battalions of the 53rd Division.<sup>1</sup> Just before nightfall he ordered Lindley to draw up all the plans for this attack, including the arrangements for naval gun support. The infantry of the 10th and 11th Divisions would stand fast in their existing positions, but the 11th Division artillery would be placed at Lindley's disposal. An hour later he ordered the 33rd Brigade, with attached troops, to co-operate by attacking the W Hills, and Br.-General Maxwell decided to advance from his present position as soon as the 53rd Division had captured Scimitar Hill.<sup>2</sup>

After midnight another letter reached General Stopford by special messenger from G.H.Q. It had been written by the Commander-in-Chief after his return from Anzac:

9th August.

Despatched 11.25 P.M.

I am in complete sympathy with you in the matter of all your officers and men being new to this style of warfare, and without any leaven of experienced troops on which to form themselves. Still I should be wrong if I did not express my concern at the want of energy and push displayed by the 11th Division. It cannot all be want of experience as 13th have shown dash and self-confidence. Turks were almost negligible yesterday . . . today there was nothing to stop determined commanders leading such fine men as yours. Tell me what is wrong with 11th Division. Is it the divisional general or brigadiers or both? . . . You must get a move on or the whole plan of operations is in danger of failing, for if you don't secure the Tekke Tepe ridge without delay the enemy will. You must use your personal influence to insist on vigorous and sustained action against the weak forces of Turks in your front, and while agreeing to the capture of W Hills and spur mentioned in C.G.S. letter to you of today, it is of vital importance to the whole operation that you *thereafter* promptly take steps to secure the Tekke Tepe ridge without possession of which Suvla Bay is not safe.<sup>3</sup> You must face casualties and strike while the opportunity offers, and remember the Tekke Tepe ridge is your principal and dominant objective and it must be captured. Every day's delay in its capture will enormously multiply your casualties. . . .

<sup>1</sup> The 158th and 159th Brigades and the 2/10th Middlesex of the 160th Brigade. The 2/4th Queen's and 1/4th R. Sussex of the 160th Brigade were to continue to assist in holding Br.-General Maxwell's line south of Sulajik.

<sup>2</sup> Br.-General Maxwell subsequently explained that had he advanced from his front line south of Sulajik before Scimitar Hill was captured his troops would have been "wiped out" by enfilade fire.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Ian Hamilton, after discussing matters with Birdwood at Anzac that afternoon, had sent an earlier message to Stopford, which arrived about the same time as Braithwaite's, suggesting that the best use to which he could put any fresh troops would be to capture the Tekke Tepe ridge.

General Stopford's reply was written before daylight on 10 Aug. the 10th August:

I much regret that the force under my command has not succeeded in gaining the high ground east of the bay, the importance of which I fully recognize and have never ceased to impress on all concerned. It has been a great disappointment to me that an attack which I had fully expected would have succeeded yesterday turned into a defensive action in which it became a question, not of pushing on but of holding the ground. I need not say that I have done my best to find out the cause of this. I hear the same thing from everyone; that it is due primarily to exhaustion from want of water. There is no doubt that there is a certain amount of water to be found, but it requires development, and in the meantime every drop of water has to be taken to the troops on mules,<sup>1</sup> of whom very few are available, and which are also becoming exhausted from want of water.

I was *most* anxious to push on the day after landing, but was assured by everyone that without water it was an impossibility, and I had to stop landing guns and even rations to get mules landed for water purposes.

I don't think the men have had much training in field manoeuvring, though I hear they are well grounded in trench warfare. The officers are inexperienced in the work and cohesion gets lost. I must also point out that the troops are being asked, without adequate artillery support, to attack an enemy who is very clever in defence. The naval guns do not do much good against men who are extended, and the moment their guns stopped yesterday morning, our men were being fired at from everywhere in their front. The only artillery available to assist in the attack was two field batteries, one of which was not horsed, and one mountain battery (I had to send the other mountain battery to the 10th Division), instead of the six to eight brigades which would have been the normal proportion for the troops engaged. I do not think the failure is due to want of energy on the part of the divisional and brigade commanders as they are as well aware as I am of the vital necessity of pushing on, but the fact remains that they cannot advance, or, when they do advance, hold their ground.

General Mahon made very slight progress yesterday and cannot push on without further artillery support which is not available. He also reports his men quite exhausted from want of water.

I have seen my divisional commanders and urged on them the necessity of a further advance today, but I regret to say that they are convinced that without more water and more artillery support

<sup>1</sup> Stopford had been misinformed. Several good wells were found on the 7th and 8th, and a number more on the 9th. The real truth was that the wells were under fire from Turkish snipers, and in the existing chaos no one had yet given orders to have them protected by rough earthworks.

10 Aug. they cannot hope for a successful advance and deprecate a further attempt.

I have, however, decided to make an attempt to push on and have ordered General Lindley to attack with his Territorials supported by the 11th Division and have asked the navy to support me with every available gun and of course I will use all the field guns at my disposal and I can only trust that the attack may be more successful than was the one yesterday.

Given water, guns, and ammunition, I have no doubt of our being able to secure the hills which are so vital to us, but for a success, more water and adequate artillery are absolutely essential . . .

#### ATTACK OF THE 53RD DIVISION, 10TH AUGUST

General Lindley had been told that the 159th Brigade was somewhere near Sulajik, and he decided that this brigade should lead the attack by capturing Scimitar Hill, and that the 158th Brigade (with the 2/10th Middlesex attached) should then go on to assault the Anafarta spur. Of this latter brigade, the three Welch Fusilier battalions were intact at Lala Baba, but the 1/1st Hereford had been ordered forward again to support the Sherwood Foresters. Its place was consequently taken by the 2/10th Middlesex, but Lindley's strength was thus reduced from nine battalions to eight. Zero hour was fixed for 6 A.M. The field guns would support the advance by shelling each objective in turn, while the ships would provide flank protection.

From the moment of its inception the odds were heavily against the success of this attack. General Lindley had only just arrived from England, and had no knowledge of the ground over which his troops were to attack. Two battalions of the 159th Brigade (1/4th Cheshire and 1/5th Welch) could not be found, and the brigade staff had spent a sleepless night in looking for them. Throughout the division the arrangements for supply were not, and could not be, in working order, and rations, water and ammunition were either delayed or altogether lacking. The divisional signal company was still without equipment, and, in the case of the 158th Brigade, units had to march off without maps and before their company officers had any idea of the task that lay in front of them.

After a vain search for the two missing battalions<sup>1</sup> the brigadier of the 159th Brigade started from his position in rear of the 32nd Brigade trenches north of Sulajik with portions of the 1/7th Cheshire in front and the 1/4th Welch in support.

The guns at Chocolate Hill and Lala Baba opened upon the

<sup>1</sup> These battalions were subsequently found south of Sulajik.

line of the first objective, and the advance was not at first opposed. 10 Aug. But some of the attacking troops remained behind in the 32nd Brigade trenches, and those who went on were soon checked by fire from Turkish skirmishers.

About 8.45 A.M., a message was received from these troops that the Turks were counter-attacking from the direction of Baka Baba. Some of the 32nd Brigade were ordered forward in support, but no sooner had they begun to advance than the troops in front came back in disorder. There was no sign of a Turkish attack, and a further effort was now made to resume the advance. Ground was gained without much trouble; but the advancing line consisted of little more than a handful of officers and men, who soon fell back to their starting-point.

Meanwhile the 158th Brigade, starting from Lala Baba about 5 A.M., had crossed the Salt Lake in column of route. Some desultory shelling did very little damage, but on reaching the further edge of the lake the leading battalion came under a certain amount of shell fire and had to deploy hurriedly. Advancing on a line to the south of that taken by the 159th Brigade, a start was now made in the direction of Scimitar Hill. No Turks could be seen, but their shrapnel fire was becoming more accurate, and a few casualties were suffered. Parties of the 159th Brigade were met in full retreat, and it was only a small portion of the 158th who, gallantly led by Lieut.-Colonel B. E. Phillips of the 1/5th R. Welch Fusiliers, eventually passed through a trench held by the two missing battalions of the 159th Brigade, and penetrated to within a few hundred yards of Scimitar Hill. From this point Colonel Phillips sent back a message to the officer commanding the 1/6th R. Welch Fusiliers: "Bring all the men you can find to where I am, 200 yards in front of the 159th Brigade trenches. We can rush the hill "they are shelling as soon as they stop." But before this message could be acted on Colonel Phillips had been killed and several of his officers wounded; his troops fell back in disorder, and the advance came to nothing.

General Stopford, who had gone to Lala Baba to watch the progress of the action, reported to G.H.Q. at 1.30 P.M. that the attack had failed, but that he was ordering a fresh attempt for five o'clock. But Sir Ian Hamilton had meanwhile received discouraging accounts of the action from an officer of his own staff, and this time it was the Chief himself who had no faith in a second attempt succeeding. "If you agree", his answer to Stopford ran, "consolidate where you are and rest and "reorganize"

An order, however, had already been issued for a fresh

10 Aug. attempt to be made, and this was allowed to stand. But a corps message was issued at 4.50 P.M.: "If the attack is held up, don't press it to such an extent as will prevent you reorganizing and consolidating the position gained before nightfall." This extinguished the last chance of accomplishing anything.

Within half an hour of starting, such troops as had gone forward were back in their original line.<sup>1</sup> General Stopford informed G.H.Q. that the attack had been stopped early "in accordance with the Commander-in-Chief's instructions", and that he would spend the following day in reorganization.

So ended the fighting at Suvla on 10th August. The Turks showed no desire to counter-attack,<sup>2</sup> and the night passed quietly. British casualties during the day except amongst officers, who had made conspicuous targets while trying to encourage their men, had not been heavy,<sup>3</sup> but the units of the 53rd Division were so scattered and disorganized that it was long before their actual losses were known.

Meanwhile at Anzac, where, throughout the past three days, the main operation had received none of the support expected from the landing at Suvla, the 10th August had witnessed the loss of the hard-won position on the slopes of Chunuk Bair.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the only troops who started were two companies of the 2/10th Middlesex. They advanced 500 yards, losing 4 officers and a number of men, and only fell back when they found they were unsupported.

<sup>2</sup> Turkish accounts attach little importance to the operations on this day. The casualties of the 12th Division, which was on the front attacked, are given as 143.

<sup>3</sup> The 1/5th Welch reported 9 officers and 124 other ranks; the 1/4th Cheshire, 11 and 250; the 1/5th R. Welch Fusiliers, 12 and 168. But these numbers included many stragglers who rejoined later.

**THE BATTLE OF SARI BAIR**  
Situation Dawn 10th August.

Sketch 27.

**NOTE.**  
Mustafa Kemal's counter attack.  
A - Apex. P - Pinnacle.

Scale of Miles: 0 1  
Scale of Feet: 0 100

Prepared in the Historical Section (Military Branch)  
Ochupase Survey 1930.

**Sketch 27.**

# THE BATTLE OF SARI BAIR

## Situation Dawn 10<sup>th</sup> August.

**Wells:** Azmak Dere, Susak Kuyu, Hazlar Chair, Kavalik Dere, Damakjetik Bair, Ahyl Dere, Walden Point, Godley, Scarle & Shaw, Dettling, Rissos, Quilts, Cartons, Kemmen, Finner's, Ashcroft's, Jolly, Lone Pine, Plateau, Shrapnel Gully, Hell Spit, Anzac Cove, Ari Burnu, Brighton Beach, Ocean Beach.

**Hills:** Kaja, Chemen Tepe, Hill, 600, 800, 900, 1000, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2000, 2100, 2200, 2300, 2400, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2800, 2900, 3000, 3100, 3200, 3300, 3400, 3500, 3600, 3700, 3800, 3900, 4000, 4100, 4200, 4300, 4400, 4500, 4600, 4700, 4800, 4900, 5000, 5100, 5200, 5300, 5400, 5500, 5600, 5700, 5800, 5900, 6000, 6100, 6200, 6300, 6400, 6500, 6600, 6700, 6800, 6900, 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7400, 7500, 7600, 7700, 7800, 7900, 8000, 8100, 8200, 8300, 8400, 8500, 8600, 8700, 8800, 8900, 9000, 9100, 9200, 9300, 9400, 9500, 9600, 9700, 9800, 9900, 10000.

**Other Features:** Cemetery, Ridge, Pine Ridge, Sun Ridge, 7th Div, 600, 800, 1000, 1200, 1400, 1600, 1800, 2000, 2200, 2400, 2600, 2800, 3000, 3200, 3400, 3600, 3800, 4000, 4200, 4400, 4600, 4800, 5000, 5200, 5400, 5600, 5800, 6000, 6200, 6400, 6600, 6800, 7000, 7200, 7400, 7600, 7800, 8000, 8200, 8400, 8600, 8800, 9000, 9200, 9400, 9600, 9800, 10000.

**Note:** Mustafa Kemal's counter attack.  
A - Apex. P - Pivot.

**Scale:** 1 mile = 1600 feet. Scale of Miles: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Heights in Feet: 0, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900, 1000, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900, 2000, 2100, 2200, 2300, 2400, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2800, 2900, 3000, 3100, 3200, 3300, 3400, 3500, 3600, 3700, 3800, 3900, 4000, 4100, 4200, 4300, 4400, 4500, 4600, 4700, 4800, 4900, 5000, 5100, 5200, 5300, 5400, 5500, 5600, 5700, 5800, 5900, 6000, 6100, 6200, 6300, 6400, 6500, 6600, 6700, 6800, 6900, 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7400, 7500, 7600, 7700, 7800, 7900, 8000, 8100, 8200, 8300, 8400, 8500, 8600, 8700, 8800, 8900, 9000, 9100, 9200, 9300, 9400, 9500, 9600, 9700, 9800, 9900, 10000.

**Prepared by:** Onclapase Survey 1930. Prepared in the Historical Section (Military Branch).

[illegible]

**Sketch 27.**

# THE BATTLE OF SARI BAIR

## Situation Dawn 10<sup>th</sup> August.

**NOTE.**  
*Mustafa Kemal's counter attack.*  
A.—Apex. P.—Pinnacle.

**SCALE OF MILES.**  
0 1 2  
**Heights in Feet.**  
0 500 1000

**Legend:**  
W.—Well.  
C—Cemetery.

**Geographic Features:**  
Azmak Dere, Kavalik Dere, Damakjetik Bair, Ahyl Dere, Walden Point, Ocean Beach, Ari Burnu, Anzac Cove, Hell Spit, Shrapnel Gully, Plateau, Lone Pine, Jolly, Ashcroft's, Quinlan's, Cartwright's, Kemmen, Fraser's, Russell's, Spinnaker, Godley's & Shaw's, Deception, Rattle Ship Hill, Bay Hill, Cheeky, Bailey, Kaja, Ridge, Sun Ridge.

**Military Units:**  
7TH DIV.

**Other Labels:**  
Sarak Ayru, Nazlar Chair, Azmak Dere, Cemetery, Wells, Ridge, Sun Ridge, Pine Ridge, Plateau, Lone Pine, Jolly, Ashcroft's, Quinlan's, Cartwright's, Kemmen, Fraser's, Russell's, Spinnaker, Godley's & Shaw's, Deception, Rattle Ship Hill, Bay Hill, Cheeky, Bailey, Kaja, Ridge, Sun Ridge.

**Prepared in the Historical Section (Military Branch),**  
**Orthopaedic Survey 1930.**

**Sketch 27.**

# THE BATTLE OF SARI BAIR

## Situation Dawn 10<sup>th</sup> August.

**NOTE.**  
*Mustafa Kemal's counter attack.*  
A.—Apex. P.—Pinnacle.

**SCALE OF MILES.**  
1 ½ 1  
**Heights in Feet.**  
W.—Well.

**Orthopaedic Survey 1930.**

**Sketch 27.**

# THE BATTLE OF SARI BAIR

## Situation Dawn 10<sup>th</sup> August.

**NOTE.**  
*Mustafa Kemal's counter attack.*  
A.—Apex. P—Pinnacle.

**SCALE OF MILES.**  
0 1  
**Heights in Feet.**  
0 500 1000

**Wells.** W. — Well.

**Cemetery.**

**Azmak Dere.**

**Kavalik Dere.**

**Damakjetik Bair.**

**Ahyl Dere.**

**Walden Point.**

**Ocean Beach.**

**Ari Burnu.**

**Anzac Cove.**

**Hell Spit.**

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**Jolly.**

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**Quinlan's.**

**Cartwright's.**

**Kemmen.**

**Fraser's.**

**Russell's.**

**Spinnaker.**

**Godley, Scott & Shaw.**

**Deighton.**

**Bauchop's Hill.**

**Cheek.**

**Riggall.**

**Paddy's Hill.**

**Ridge.**

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**Wells.**

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**Russell's.**

**Spinnaker.**</

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